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HB 20 HD 1 RELATING TO NETS

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Energy and Natural Resources
Public Hearing - March 20, 1989

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HB 20 HD 1 seeks to address the problem of fishing with ocean drift nets by banning the use of ocean drift nets in state waters.

Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

We strongly concur with the intent of HB 20 HD 1. Long gill nets set adrift for some period of time (usually 24-48 hours) are non-selective of the species they catch. This may include fish with little or no commercial value that are then discarded dead or in weakened condition. Marine mammals and turtles are also known to become entangled. Perhaps the most serious environmental problem associated with drift nets results from their loss. In this case they "ghost fish" for indefinite periods and continue to trap fish and other marine life for no beneficial purpose.

We would encourage an amendment to include specific provisions for enforcement since penalties and fines may be necessary to provide deterrents. SB 1430 SD 1, the Senate version of this bill, includes a number of these specific enforcement measures. For example, violators may be fined \$50,000 if they are found fishing with or in possession of a drift gill net; vessels found in violation would be denied access to state harbor facilities for a period of five years from the date of the conviction; and violators would also lose their fishing rights for a period of five years from the date of the conviction.

Because drift gill nets have such a high potential to inflict great damage on local fisheries and marine biota, an outright ban is appropriate. Penalties and fines should be specified to strengthen the force of the proposed ban.